

Address by Admiral Stansfield Turner  
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The DCI Management Advisory Group  
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I would like to start by thanking the DCI MAG for inaugurating this program. This is the third in a series. If there is one thing that will help us all in the Agency it is improved internal communications. As large as we are, as spread out as we are around the world let alone in Washington, and as necessary as it is to have some kind of compartmentation, internal communications are really difficult. Anything like this that will help I think is just great.

I really don't want to talk very long. I want to take your questions, your comments, your suggestions. But I thought perhaps you would like me to say a few words on two topics: how I view the internal situation of the Agency today, and what the status of our external relationships are; specifically, how do our customers perceive us and are they using our product? Let me start here at home.

Inside the Agency, I have never been more optimistic, never felt better about the internal state of affairs. I think in the last year we have clearly turned the corner on those years of concern about the investigations and the ensuing adverse publicity we received. I think, as an Agency, and as individuals, we now have put the past into perspective. Some of the criticism was justifiable. Much of it was media exaggeration. I think we all recognize now that while mistakes may have been made, they must be kept in proportion. Today we have the right controls, the right attitudes to ensure that we go forward in the proper manner. I sense throughout the organization today that the spirit, the attitude, the hope, our expectations for the future are where they should be.

One thing that has particularly pleased me over the last year and a half has been the increasing sense of teamwork and cooperation between the four directorates and between the independent offices and the directorates. This teamwork is critical to our success. Most of all, because of the quality of our people, I feel very confident of what we are doing now and of our capability to do our job for the future. We have been blessed for 32 years with top quality people. Today that continues to be one of our great strengths. If there is one responsibility that each of us shares, not just the DDCI, the Director of Personnel, and myself, but also each of you is to ensure that we continue to recruit and keep the same quality of people so that we have as good a CIA in 1989 and 1999 as we do in 1979. That is absolutely fundamental. Consequently, I have felt that personnel matters and personnel management have been my greatest personal responsibility.

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Last winter, as you know, we received some superb assistance from the National Academy of Professional Administrators, a group with an impressive background in personnel administration from all elements of industry and the government. We are all pleased that the end result of their 3 month study was to reaffirm that we have a basically sound personnel management organization. At the same time they suggested many ways in which we can better use our management system to the individual employee's advantage more. Since that report came in last winter, we have been working on their suggestions. We have instituted a more uniform promotion system, based more on the panels. In fact, we are going to panels in all promotion areas. Clerical panels, for example, have been instituted for the first time. There is still more to be done, but we feel that the uniform, panel-based promotion system will ensure more equitable, utterly fair opportunity for the individual employee to be recognized and rewarded for the contribution which he or she is making. The new performance evaluation report is intended, to be sure that employees put their best foot forward to the panels.

Inter- and intra-directorate rotation opportunity is being increased. This will broaden employees experience and increase their perspective. It will also improve their chances of finding exactly the right career niche.

More stress is being placed on recruiting the right quality and quantity of people. Recruiting is up in both numbers and quality. We are now working hard to reduce the time it takes from the receipt of an application from a potential recruit to the time we say yes or no. We have sometimes lost good candidates because of the delays that we have particularly with our security procedures.

We are putting more stress on helping low performers. We are counseling them, moving them to areas which are better suited to their talents, helping them to grow so that they can increase their productivity and enjoy a rewarding career.

As we go through the rest of the NAPA recommendations, rejecting some and accepting others, two basic personnel objectives are always in mind: first, to be sure we have the right mix and quality of people to do the Agency's job in the future, and secondly, to afford a reasonable career opportunity to each individual employee; an opportunity to contribute, to utilize his or her talents, an opportunity for reasonable promotion potential as well as other rewards.

Each of those goals requires a good personnel management system, which we have. But, we always need to keep sharpening the ability of that system to look at each employee as an individual and ask, what is the next career step? What training? What rotation? What assignments will best help this employee utilize his or her talents to the Agency's and the employees advantage? Are we helping that employee to contribute as much as he possibly can?

Secondly, the personnel management system must prevent employees from being blocked in their promotion opportunity by humps and valleys. As people come into the Agency, if we don't look far enough ahead and make well-founded decisions on whether we need them at the bottom or somewhere in the middle, we can easily end up as we have in some areas of the Agency today with too many people in some grades and qualifications and too few in others. An employee who comes right behind a grade or qualification hump has very little opportunity to advance. One who comes right behind a valley, may be advanced so rapidly that they don't have the experience necessary to do the job they are asked to do. We must be able to level out those humps and valleys; to give all employees the same opportunity to advance. One of the ways is through good planning, as I have just described. Another is to take advantage of the fact that we are one agency, with a uniform promotion and personnel management system. If we have the interdirectorate mobility which one agency implies, we can shift people from a hump to a valley and thereby equalize opportunity.

Let me digress here for a moment to say that my comments at the beginning about greater cooperation and teamwork are part of my enthusiasm for the fact that we are becoming more and more of one agency. That is very important. The profession of intelligence has changed over the last fifteen or twenty years. Being one agency in which each directorate works intimately with the others is a fact of life, and is more critical to us today than it has ever been. The DDO provides HUMINT. Why? Because the NFAC needs it. Then NFAC and the DDO turn to the DDS&T and ask what SIGINT and PHOTINT are bringing in which will help us. How do we bring all three of these disciplines together? Only teamwork enables us to best use an agent; to build on what is known from SIGINT and PHOTINT. It is wasteful and an unnecessary risk to use a spy, an agent, when you can get a picture with a satellite. In turn, you frequently target an agent to find out how best to target SIGINT and PHOTINT. We have had some superlative examples in recent years of this kind of teamwork. This teamwork, this thinking of ourselves as actually being one agency where there is good communication between all of the directorates, is utterly vital. I am very encouraged by the evolution I see in that direction.

Let me shift to the external side. None of us would want to be here if we didn't feel we were making a contribution to the decision making and policy formulation of our government. That is why we are here and without that our work would give us little satisfaction. So let's look at our customers.

Clearly the President, the National Security Council Staff, and the Cabinet members who deal with foreign policy, are our principal customers. People ask me, how are we doing with the President? We are doing very well with the President and his chief foreign policy advisors.

Then someone always says, well what about the intelligence failure in Iran? It was just a year ago now that we had the so-called intelligence failure in Iran and the President wrote a note to the Secretary of State, Dr. Brzezinski and myself suggesting that we could improve political intelligence reporting. The President didn't say, nor is it true, that that situation represented an intelligence failure. That was coined by the American media and was an exaggeration. We would have liked to have done better, but there was no failure. The President's suggestions have helped us improve for the future. Among other things, a fine political intelligence working group has evolved around the DDCI, David Aaron of the NSC and David Newsom from State which today ensures the same kind of communication and teamwork I've been talking about in the Agency. As a result, we are getting a lot more support, particularly on problems like cover.

Put the shoe on the other foot. If we had not done quite as well as we would have liked in Iran, and the President had said nothing to me, and incidentally this wasn't the first time he made a suggestion to me, think of the implications of that. To me that would have implied that he wasn't concerned, that he wasn't reading and depending on his intelligence input. The fact that he was concerned and interested is indicative of how important he regards what we do for him. Six mornings a week we give him a Presidential Daily Brief--the PDB--and I guarantee you it is the highest quality intelligence product in this or any town. Regularly I brief him orally both on substantive matters and on what we are doing and how we are doing it. He is intensely interested, and wants to be kept abreast of intelligence activities.

In National Security Council meetings and meetings of subordinate committees of the Council, very frequently it is the Intelligence Community which leads off and sets the background of the situation which is up for debate. I think--though I haven't been here long--from what I have seen and heard, that our product is better utilized today, more visible, more relied upon by the top Executive Branch policy-makers than perhaps ever before in the Agency's history.

Now let me point out that there is a downside, a problem side to that. The more you are responsive to the Administration's needs for intelligence, the more likely it is that somebody will say you are so responsive you are not being objective, detached from the policy process. You are being politicized. There is nothing that is further from the truth today than that. Let me give you an example.

Last week there was a story in the newspaper about an NSC sub-committee meeting on Morocco. I was chagrined when I read that the Central Intelligence

Agency had taken a position that arms should not be supplied to Morocco. I assure you that while I did give that initial briefing, as you would expect, I neither took a position for nor against arms for Morocco. I merely set the background for discussions. From what we said about the factual situation, somebody at that meeting drew his own conclusion as to whether that meant we should give arms or should not give arms to Morocco and then, in conjunction with leaking the whole meeting, attributed his conclusion to us. It is a hazard we constantly run, but we were not politicized.

If you want the best example of all, it is SALT II. If there was ever a case where the intelligence agencies could have been put under intense pressure to make the intelligence fit the policy, it certainly is SALT II, the prime foreign policy objective of this Administration. From the beginning, we have held resolutely to one position: we talk about monitoring SALT, we do not talk about verifying SALT. We don't make judgments on whether SALT monitoring is adequate for verification, adequate for the safety, adequate for the security of our country. Those are political judgments. That permits us to give Congress and the Administration the information that they need to make those judgments, but it does not put us in the position of supporting or not supporting the treaty because it is verifiable or not verifiable. I don't think that you can find anyone in the Administration, on Capitol Hill, or, in this case, even in the media who would seriously contend that the Central Intelligence Agency was politicized thus far over SALT II. I intend for us to stay that way.

If we are ever accused of being politicized, pull some of these examples out of your hip pocket. Would a politicized Agency have disclosed in the middle of the SALT II debates that the Soviets had a brigade in Cuba? Would a politicized Agency have undercut an Administration policy on Korea by revealing a build-up of North Korean military forces? Would a politicized Agency in the middle of a debate on the Panama Canal Treaty have disclosed that some of Trujillo's relatives were dealing in drugs? Would a politicized Agency have published some of the unclassified studies that we have published in the last couple of years, some of which have not been very popular with the policy makers? Of course not. I don't believe we have been politicized, and I think the record proves it. I believe we are supporting the President well and he in turn is supporting us well. Look at his October 1st speech on the Cuban brigade. He specifically mentioned the need to enhance intelligence community capabilities. He specifically mentioned the great importance of measures to protect our sources and methods. And, while it was not in his speech, in the private briefings he gave to members of Congress and others he laid great personal stress on the fact that he saw no evidence of an intelligence failure or shortcoming in connection with the Soviet brigade. I feel that uncovering the brigade in Cuba for what it is was quite a coup on our part. One that involved that dovetailing of intelligence and teamwork that I mentioned to you earlier.

We've turned the corner with the public in part also because we have been more open with them and have tried to help them understand what intelligence contributes to our national security. I know that this is controversial, but let me say with deep conviction that there is no way we can avoid being more open with the American public. The secrecy of the past is gone. The persevering, inquiring reporters are there on the doorstep every day. If they don't get it straight from us, they are going to get it crooked from somebody else. More importantly, there is a basic premise in a democracy that the more the public knows about the functioning of government, the better that government will be. I believe that. I believe that we in the government think we know what is best for the country; that we know best how to handle complex foreign policy and domestic policy situations. But that is not so. The American public knows best. It takes them time, but when they understand what is going on, and when they set their course, they will do a better job than any of us in the government in determining which way the country should be going on major issues. If there is any truth to that premise, then I don't believe we should pretend that everything we own is classified or must be classified and therefore kept from the public. That would be false anyway. It would be dangerous for us to try to withdraw into a total cloak of anonymity because, where there have been mistakes in the past, it has not been because of deliberate, maliciousness. More often than not, it resulted from an understandable over enthusiasm which, because of the nature of our business, could be shrouded in a secret environment where adequate checks and balances could not function.

Our willingness today to share more of what we are about with the American public has brought significant and positive results. We are helping the public to carry on sensible, useful debates on critical topics like the energy issue. We are helping the public to understand the intelligence function and the contribution it makes to good government. In so doing we are banking good will and understanding that we could well have used in 1975-76. But let me reemphasize that what we are talking about is controlled openness; carefully controlled openness. No openness for classified material. No openness for sources and methods. No openness for how we go about our business. But openness by recognizing that if it can be unclassified, there is no reason not to make it available to the public. In so doing we help ourselves to protect what is classified.

Better security goes hand in hand with greater openness. Everyone of us in this room would acknowledge, I believe, that there is too much classified material in all of our safes. As we winnow that down by weeding out what really doesn't have to be classified, we will reduce what we must protect and hopefully we will at the same time grow to respect better what is left.

Improving security is, as you know, one of our major policy initiatives. We are working hard on Capitol Hill and in the Executive Branch for Freedom of Information relief legislation, for identities legislation of the kind I mentioned with respect to people like Agee, for graymail legislation so we can be more confident in court that we won't have to spill everything we are trying to protect to get a conviction. We are working very hard here inside the Agency and throughout the intelligence community to simplify, but at the same time strengthen, the basic security procedures so that we can and will carry them out. Congress and the Administration are supporting us in all of these areas. We must staunch the leaks which have been spewed over the papers just unmercifully and criminally, be they about Morocco or intelligence techniques, or we won't be as capable and successful an intelligence service as we must be.

We are the best intelligence service in the world. You, I, all of us are dedicated to doing everything we can to keep it that way. None of us has a monopoly on good ideas on how to preserve further as well as enhancing our intelligence capabilities. I look for your suggestions, for your advice. From the first day I came here I have invited employees to contact me with a simple note in an envelope. I have never guaranteed a response, but I have always guaranteed that I would read each one. We need your help, we need your advice.

I appreciate the chance to be with you and say these few remarks today. Now let us turn to your questions.